

In the Apostolic churches, the apostles and elders assisted the local churches in business transactions, received calls for help. "Come over and help us."

If a local congregation, bishop or elder, deacon or lay member departs from the universal law or introduces human laws or mandates and by so doing brings in damnable heresies, such the Holy Apostle would have "delivered to satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Inasmuch as all Christians are amenable to the divine law great care should be exercised in the administering of it, and also in having it administered so that there be no schisms in the body.

Biblical church government is Episcopal. The term Episcopal or Episcopacy is from the Greek term, *Episcopos* signifying bishop, overseer. (See Acts 20:28.) *Episcopous*, "overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood," I Tim. 3:1, 2. Cruden defines the term bishop from *Episcopos*, "a spiritual overseer that has the charge of souls to instruct and rule them by the word."

Christ is termed, *Episcopos*, bishop. *Poimena*, shepherd or guardian of souls, I Epistle of Peter 2:25. Bishops or elders are properly overseers, pastors, feeders of the flock; not lords over God's heritage; but servants of the most high God, administering and assisting in the administering of the universal, immutable law of heaven.

The Brethren church now is, and according to her avowed creed, entitled, "The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," as adopted at the National Conference in Dayton, Ohio, held June 6 and 7, 1883. She is Congregational, inter-Congregational and Episcopal, and if true to that creed she will be to the end of the ages.

Now I have given my conceptions of Congregational church government, etc. Let us not for one moment entertain the thought that the church of the most high God is constituted of classes, organizations, congregations or assemblies that have the right to dispense with her rites and ceremonies, or to change them suitably to their wishes or desires.

Mission boards have the right to see that missionaries are true and faithful in administering the law of the church. District mission boards, whether Elders, Deacons or lay members, have the right to demand of the district or State Evangelists that they "preach the word," administer the law of heaven properly, and in case of a departure therefrom have the right to call them to account and have them dealt with in consonance with the "universal, immutable law."

What I have written I have written, subject to Biblical criticism. Lord bless this missive so far as it is agreeable to thy divine will. Amen.

Faith in God is a dead form if it do not bring forth the fruit of penitence and obedience.—*Murphy*.

## GOING TO JESUS

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"Will ye also go away?" was the sad question which our Lord addressed to his twelve disciples on a certain day at Capernaum. Many who had gathered around him for instruction or for healing, had their backs upon him and walked no more with him. To our Lord's touching appeal, impetuous Peter makes the quick response: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Let me make this prompt reply of the warm-hearted apostle a text for a brief, loving talk with the readers of this article.

All of you are either going toward Jesus Christ, or else are drifting away from him. Many of you, I trust, are drawing into closer fellowship with Jesus every day. The nearer you are to him, the stronger, the wiser, the happier and the holier you will be. Union with Christ is vital Christianity. Blessed be the love that draws, or the storm that drives you closer to the Saviour! But I fear that others who read these lines may be drifting farther from him; and this steady flotation from your only hope of salvation is none the less dangerous because it is imperceptible.

I use the word *drift* because it describes accurately your perilous condition. When a vessel has no propelling sail set upon its spars and no guiding hand at its helm, and is borne on at the mercy of any current that strikes its keel, it is in danger of drifting on the rocks. You have probably never come to the distinct determination to reject the Lord Jesus Christ definitely and forever. Few ever make that horrible decision with calm deliberation; I do not believe that there is one person in a thousand who does not expect, and intend at some future day, to come to Christ and be saved. Such may be your secret intention. Yet you are really farther from Christ than you were a year ago; there are strong currents that are steadily and stealthily carrying you away. That young man who when he left the Sunday school was almost a Christian, but who now squanders his Sabbaths over his cigar and his secular newspaper, has *drifted*. Another has been caught in the eddies of skepticism, and is slowly losing all faith in his mother's Bible; his drift toward the rocks of infidelity is unmistakable. When did that man with the bloated face and the brandy breath become the slave of the decanter? Not on any one definite day; he has drifted into drunkenness. In the same way you are gradually being carried by social currents, or by worldly influences, or by the trend of your own sinful heart farther and farther from Christ and from the only life worth living. Your condition is fearfully dangerous.

"Weep ye not for the dead," said the olden prophet, "neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away from God." If the angel of death had borne you up into the joys and the glories of the "life everlasting," there would be no occasion for such mourning as there is now; for the currents you are in are carrying you away, every

hour, from your one only hope of salvation.

There is only one way for a mariner to stop the perilous drift of his vessel toward rocks or quicksands; he must arouse himself quickly, grasp the helm, put about ship, and head her away with all the canvas he can crowd on. So with yourself; you can only check your dangerous drift toward perdition by the prompt and resolute determination to set your helm toward the cross of Christ. What every true Christian now on earth, or in Heaven, has done, you must do. The Christian has never found that the currents of this world would drift him toward holiness, or soul-happiness, or Heaven. He set his face like a flint toward Christ. Repentance is a "tacking ship"; and a turning toward Christ with grief and hatred of sin, and a resolute endeavor after new obedience. He went to the atoning Saviour for the pardon of his sins; so must you. He carried his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fulness, his guilt to Christ's righteousness, his penitent heart to the loving heart of Jesus; so must you. Saving faith is just this cleaving unto Christ until you become one. "To whom shall I go?" Not to your pastor, or any Christian friend, or into any inquiry meeting—heiping as they might be—but straight to Jesus. His invitation is not—go to the Bible and read, or go to the church and worship, or go to the altar and pray, or go to the font and be baptized—but *Come unto Me*, and ye shall have life!

And when you have once gone to Jesus, you will wonder that you never came before. The pardon of your sins will give you such a light heart, and the delightful sense of *being right* will give you such solid satisfaction. Christ's guidance will be so sure, so safe, so infallible that you can always walk securely. His presence will give life its highest, noblest, richest inspiration. And when sudden temptation assails you, there He is at your side to help you in your hour of need. Dark hours and tempests may befall you, but His voice breaks thru the gloom—"Lo! I am with you; be of good cheer, be not afraid!"

Christianity is a practical thing to be tested by experience; and a single personal testimony is worth a ton of abstract arguments. This week I received from an entire stranger in a distant State, so pathetic and remarkable a letter that I take the liberty to introduce a few sentences. The writer, when under the shadow of a deep affliction, had met with a small volume of mine entitled "God's Light on Dark Clouds." I sent her some other little books which I had published. She writes: "I am a Southern girl, raised in wealth, with every advantage of society; in all the country-side I was the merriest, happiest girl, and never knew a sad hour. I danced away the spring-time of my life; I never thought that I was wicked—in fact, I didn't *think* anything. But it is the same old story. I ran away and married, and am now suffering the just penalty of my disobedience. Neglected and ill-treated,